

EXPLORING VOCATION AND CALLING WITH CHILDREN

LESSON 1

Title: Listening to God

Opening the lesson: God wants to help and guide us in our lives, he can only do that if we take time to listen to him. But listening to God isn't easy. We listen carefully to the story of Samuel, a young man who heard God speaking to him, but he didn't realise it was God.

Bible Story: 1 Samuel 3:1-21 [God calls Samuel]

Activity 1: 'Come here, Samuel' Game

Have the children sit in a circle. One child will lay down in the middle of the circle and pretend to be asleep. Pick a child in the circle to say, 'come here, Samuel.' Samuel will then wake up and guess who called. If guessed correctly then the two children will switch places and the game continues. If the child guesses incorrectly then all say, 'Go back to sleep' and someone else will say 'come here, Samuel.' Continue until they pick the correct child.

Remind the children when the Lord called for Samuel he thought it was Eli at first. Eventually he realized that it was the Lord calling him. The Lord had an important message for Samuel.

Activity 2: Making Telephones

Give each child two polystyrene or paper cups. Poke a hole in the bottom of each cup and connect them with a string or ribbon about 3 ft long. Secure the string inside the cup with tape. Decorate the cups with crayons or stickers. Show the class how to talk through one end to a friend.

Remind the children when God called Samuel he didn't use a phone! He spoke directly to Samuel. We need to always be listening for signs that God is speaking to us.

Activity 3: Listening Game

Have the children sit with their heads down on the table and their eyes closed. Make different sounds and have them try to guess what the sound is. You can use a smart phone to do this by looking up sounds on

YouTube or using various items to hand, such as knocking on the door, a timer, or rustling paper.

Commend the children on their listening skills and remind them they should always listen to God!

Closing the lesson: Samuel learned that it is very important to listen to God. Invite the children to consider how we can listen to God? God speaks to us when we pray, when we read the bible, when we go to church, and sometimes he gives us messages through other people – but we need to listen.

Prayer: Lord God, help us to be like Samuel and listen carefully to what important things you have to tell us. Amen.

LESSON 2

Title: Our Gifts and Talents

Opening the lesson: God has made each one of us in his image, but we are also all unique. There are different things that we each enjoy and that we're good at doing. When we bring all of our abilities together, we can do wonderful things for God.

Bible Story: Romans 12:4-6 [One body, many members]

Activity 1: Self Portrait

Invite the children to draw a picture of themselves and to write around the picture what they enjoy and what they are good at doing. When they have finished encourage each child to talk about what they have written.

Remind the children that it is ok to be different and God has special tasks for all of us using our different strengths and qualities.

Activity 2: Our Gifts are for Giving

Provide craft materials for the children create a gift for someone. May a gift to cheer someone up or to show someone how much they care for them.

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Tell the children that the gifts they have made represent the gifts God has given them and they should use their special gifts to serve God and help others.

Activity 3: Balloon Game

Get the children to form a circle. During this game they must hit a balloon to each other, and they must not let it hit the ground. Try to ensure every child gets a turn at hitting the balloon.

Help the children understand that they need to work together as one to ensure the balloon doesn't hit the floor. Just like the whole church needs all the different members to work together to keep God's work going.

Closing the lesson: The church is Jesus' body made up of many members with special gift and talents, strengths and abilities. Each member has a special role to play in the life of the church. Encourage the children to think about the different tasks people do and consider what they might enjoy doing in the life of the church.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for your church. Help us to use the special gifts you have given us to show our love for you and for others. Amen.

LESSON 3

Title: Jesus Knows Us

Opening the lesson: Shepherds have an important task of keeping their sheep safe from harm. Jesus watches over us like a shepherd and wants us to stay safe from harm by listening to him and following him.

Bible Story: John 10:1-18 [The Good Shepherd]

Activity 1: Good Shepherd and Sheep Picture

Make a large picture of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, leading his flock along a path. Invite the children to make a sheep, decorating it with cotton wool and putting their name on it.

Remind the children that they are each one of Jesus' precious sheep. He loves and cares for us and calls us by our name.

Activity 2: The Lost Sheep

If you have a fairly large group of children, invite one of the children to be the shepherd and to hide their eyes while one of the other children is hidden, representing a lost sheep. You may need to use a sheet to cover the child who will be the lost sheep. The shepherd then has to guess who is missing. When they guess correctly, the lost sheep then become the shepherd and the game continues.

Explain to the children that shepherds know their sheep so well, they will know when one is missing and will search for them until they are found. In the same way, Jesus searches for us when we sometimes lose our way from him.

Activity 3: Find the Shepherd

Create a maze using large objects around a room. Blind fold a volunteer who will be a sheep and another volunteer will be the shepherd. The sheep needs to listen to the voice of the shepherd to get to the end of the maze. Alternatively, a maze can be drawn on a piece of paper and the children have to guide the sheep from one end of the maze to the shepherd at the other end.

Remind the children how important it is to follow instructions from a parent and a teacher to keep us safe, the same is true of Jesus who wants to keep us safe from harm.

Closing the lesson: Sheep know the voice of their shepherd and follow where the shepherd leads, because they trust the shepherd. Explain to the children that we need to trust Jesus, our Shepherd.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for being our loving shepherd and watching over us to keep us safe. Help us to never lose our way from you. Amen.

[Activity ideas from: 'The Complete Children's Ministry Book' by Katie Thompson and ministry-to-children.com]

